

Town wants residents' ideas on fixing Machine Shop Village

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NORTH ANDOVER — Community leaders are looking for feedback tomorrow night on plans for the first phase of a massive renovation of the historic Machine Shop Village neighborhood.

"This is the opportunity for public comment," said Liz Fennessy, a neighborhood resident who is helping organize the project. "You get any of the hiccups out of the way now."

A draft of the plan presented in December includes three new elm trees, granite curbs and an enamel poster detailing the history of the neighborhood, which was built in the late 1800s to house workers at the former Davis & Furber mills near Mill Pond. Preservationists say the neighborhood is unique because it has remained largely intact for nearly a century.

The neighborhood is bordered by Main Street, Water Street and East Water Street, and it includes dozens of homes built in a grid by

the owners of the mills. The first phase of work is set to begin on Elm Street later this year. Main and Water streets will be completed later, during the town's underground utilities project, Fennessy said.

While the plan is only the first in what is expected to be a multi-phase project, Fennessy said she hopes all residents will attend because the first phase will establish a design scheme that will be carried out through the whole neighborhood eventually.

"Whatever type of sign is chosen for street signs, that's going to be used for Machine Shop Village in the future," she said. "It sets the tone for what goes forward with the rest of the village over time."

Landscape architect Kyle Zick of the Boston firm Carol R. Johnson Associates will present the plan at tomorrow night's Town Hall meeting. Town Meeting in 2004 approved a \$22,000 community preservation grant for the plans and, a year later, approved \$250,000 for the first phase of con-

struction.

When complete, the area will see new sidewalks, crosswalks, a kiosk for historical information and tours, and historical markers, as well as new trees and curbing. The total cost of the project could exceed \$4 million.

Community leaders are looking

into securing designation of the neighborhood as a historical district, to prevent out-of-character development and secure more money from state and federal grants.

The meeting is at 7 tomorrow night at Town Hall.